

## Chapter 1: A War Interrupted

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Summary: The Clone wars were interrupted by a massive fleet of strange ships that decimated planets as it went. The Republic and CIS join forces and Count Dooku and his minions go into exile. Now, Assajj Ventress is sent to Dromund Kaas on a secret mission.

### 1. Chapter 1

#### Preface:

The Clone Wars had been raging for nearly twenty-six standard months. The Galactic Republic had lost more ground than it had gained, but with the death of Sev'rance Tann at the hand of Jedi Master and General Echuu Shen-Jon the tide turned. The Jedi master went into exile and the Republic forces gained the upper hand for awhile, but before long, the Confederacy of Independent Systems developed new weapons under the command of the Kaleesh Cyborg General Grievous. Neither side could gain any ground. Dozens of fleets containing thousands of star ships blasted and pounded each other into oblivion. As the battles continued, multitudes of aliens from the Unknown Regions flooded into Wild Space and the Outer Rim Territories, seeking sanctuary from a mysterious and deadly enemy. Before long, news of this enemy, an alien alliance known as the Covenant, spread throughout the entire galaxy. The senators sued for peace between the Republic and the Separatist, asking that negotiations resume. Reluctantly, Supreme Chancellor Palpatine re-opened Negotiations with Count Dukoo but neither side could come to any agreement of terms. As the negotiations continued, Republic and Confederate fleets float across from one another in a very tense standoff for weeks. No progress was made and the Jedi took the time to search for the Dark Lord of the Sith called Darth Sideous. Suddenly, out of nowhere a massive fleet of completely unfamiliar war ships, bigger than any had ever seen, appeared and destroyed dozens of planets, killing trillions of innocent people, both Republic and Separatist. Immediately, the Confederate leadership, against the will of Count Dukoo accepted all terms and pledged their fleets to the defense of

the galaxy and the Republic.

## Chapter 1

Assajj Ventress moved disembarked from her shuttle flanked by four EG-5 Jedi Hunter droids. Dromuund Kaas' skies flashed and rumbled with a dark side storm so powerful that it covered the entire planet, a result of the rule of one of the most powerful Sith Lords that had ever ruled in recorded history. For several moments, she simply stood, basking in the power that saturated the planet. After a few moments, she stepped off, leaving it to the EG-5's to keep up with her. Ahead was a great citadel, now empty save for the trappings and memories of an ancient and utterly lost empire. Ventress snorted ever so slightly, wondering why her master, Darth Tyranus had sent her here instead of on a mission of assassination or sabotage that would aid in their rise back to popularity and power at least in the Confederacy of Independent Systems if not in the galaxy as a whole. Considering the new, very powerful enemy, it would take only a small amount of the right pressure and some political leverage from their inside source to put Lord Tyranus, Ventress and any of their other servant into positions of very great power. Instead, here she was looking for some old Sith Lord's holocran on a planet that bordered the unknown regions. With a wave of her hand, Ventress opened the doors. Inside, it was dark. Very dark. As they stepped in, one of her guard droids spoke, "Mistress, our sensors are picking up a large number of unidentified life forms in the three very large rooms."

Ventress subconsciously reached for her twin lightsaber hilts she kept attached to the back of her belt. The droids around her followed her example. "What three rooms are they?" she hissed just audibly enough for their audio receptors to be heard. A whirring noise came from inside one of their heads as they accessed the information and replied, "It would seem a hanger, a library and a training and recreation room."

Ventress unclipped her two lightsabers and moved forward without a noise. Here four guards followed without even a clink on the duracrete floor. Before long, they came upon a sliding door that had been blasted aside in ages past. Slipping in quietly, Ventress sensed many life forms of an unfamiliar nature. Peeking from behind a fallen pillar, she saw a large group of Covenant aliens of many different kinds. The majority were either the squat little creatures called Unngoy, or Grunts and the jackals, a tall reptilian bird thing. Also in the group though were the tall sinewy Sanghali also called Elites. She even saw two massive Hunters. What were they doing here? Right about now, she wished she had more than four Jedi killer droids with her. Moving quietly from cover to cover, Ventress gathered information as she went. Suddenly, she noticed an ancient terminal against one wall. Moving with all the stealth of a highly trained dark Jedi assassin, she pushed a button. With a very low hum, it began to operate. Pulling out a datapad, she sliced the system and began to download all the information that it held. Something hissed by her ear and slammed into the wall. She ducked instinctively and turned. They had been spotted and the Covenant were firing their strange plasma and projectile based weapons at her. In a single motion, she and her droids drew their lightsabers and deflected another salvo. Suddenly, Ventress sensed something and ducked, spinning out of the way. She heard a hissing woosh of an invisible energy weapon swinging over her head. With the power of the force,

she sensed that three cloaked individuals that were trying to kill her. Closing her eyes, Ventress fell into the force and fought her attackers. They were strong enough that using a lightsaber one handed nearly got her killed as their blows powered through her defenses. Thinking quickly, Ventress leapt away to gain some room and hooked her lightsabers together at the pummels, making an s-shaped saber staff and switching to the more defensive Shien lightsaber form. Her eyes still closed, she could sense every movement of the three creatures that engaged her. In the back of her mind, she heard three of the four EG-05 droids slashing there way through the other Covenant troops. The fourth must have gone down. One of her three attackers leapt over her and attacked from behind. They were as skilled as many a Jedi knight she had fought - and killed. With a swift and deceptive movement, Ventress swung her front blade at one of the creatures feet, only to catch it in midair with the back end of her blade. She expected the created to be cut clean in half. Instead, the air shimmered around it and when she opened her eyes, she saw that it was an elite in black armor wielding an energy sword. Cursing mentally, Ventress leapt away again, force pushing all three of her opponents away as she did. If all three had personal shields, then she was in trouble. Turning, she was about to call her four droids, only to see them in pieces surrounded by grunts and jackals. One of the hunters were dead, the other looked as though he was seriously injured with green gore streaming from long cuts. Fear suddenly began to grip Ventress as strange pink crystal projectiles and bursts of green plasma streaked toward her. It was clear that fighting was no longer an effective method of success so she fled. Using the force to call the datapad to her hand, she ran as fast as her force augmented legs could carry her, a pale blur in the half-light of the temple. After several minutes, she slowed down to a normal speeded jog. Though she could hear her pursuers, she knew that she would be gone before they caught up with her. As she approached the door, a large elite in strange armor materialized out of thin air as his cloak turned off. His armor was gold and silver and he carried an energy sword in each hand. Ventress stopped and drew her weapon again. In a deep, almost majestic voice, the Elite spoke in basic, "You an abomination to the Forerunners' memory and an infidel to the prophets of the Covenant. Do you have any last words, human female?"

Ventress just curled her lip and said, "I am a dark Jedi assassin and you have already spoken your last, creature."

With a doubles snap-hiss, Ventress's saber staff came to crimson life and she leapt at her enemy. The Elites own weapons hissed into life and he stood his ground. Shortly into the confrontation, Ventress realized that she was in serious trouble. This Elite was strong enough to back aside her strongest blows and defenses. Pretty soon, he was pushing her back the way she had come, getting within an inch of killing her with every swing. Thinking fast, she used the force to try and throw him to the side and run past him to her ship. Instead of flying into the side wall, the Elite merely fell over heavily onto the ground. Leaping over his prone form, Ventress bolted for the blasted door. Her heart nearly stopped when she saw what was left of her ship smoking in the long deserted street. Suddenly, she heard the sound of a weapon discharging and felt herself hurled forward. She felt hot blood coming from her burning back and felt life ebbing from her. As her eyes clouded over, she saw the Elite standing over her with a very odd weapon in his hands. It was a small arm of some sort. As she faded away, the creature said, "I am the Arbiter of the

Covenant and you were not worthy of my skills, human."

## 2. Chapter 2: The End of Darth Tyranus

The Planet Ziost was a barren and frozen waist land that held no population save for the newcomers that had settled in one of the ancient Sith fortresses. Inside the walls, a controlled environment allowed for warmth and even some small degree of comfort in the ruins. In one of the many rooms of the fortress on a velvet cushion sat the former Count and Jedi master Dooku. After the war with Covenant broke out in the middle of the Clone Wars, Dooku and all his closest allies and servants were driven into Exile by both Separatist and Republic forces before the Confederacy returned to the Republic to fight a common enemy. After that Dooku forsook his right name and went by his Sith title of Darth Tyranus. Now the man sat in study of a Sith holocron that once belonged to the Sith Lord Darth Rivan. The Sith Lord was teaching on the warping of space and time when the door into the meditation room opened off to Tyranus' right. The Death Watch Mandalorian Leader Pre Vizsla walked in, holding his helmet under his arm. "My Lord, the probe droid you sent to Dromund Kaas has transmitted its findings. It would appear that Ventress and her guards were attacked by Covenant forces in the ancient citadel and she was killed by one of the Elites. I believe he called himself the Arbiter of the Covenant. Would you like to see the feed yourself, my Lord?"

Tyranus deactivated the holocron and stood up gracefully. "Yes, Mandalore Vizsla. I will see what the probe has shown and then we must begin readying for evacuation against the chance that the Covenant will find us here."

With long and graceful strides, the Sith Lord made his way to the tech station where several droids and a rodian technician were watching feeds from cameras. Vizsla keyed on one of the monitors. A feed popped up of a swamp. The probe was moving through it towards an ancient and crumbling city. Vizsla sped the feed until it reached the inner city. As the feed continued, it showed Ventress' ship landed in the ancient street. The sound of blaster fire came from inside the citadel. Suddenly, the ship was struck by bolts of blue plasma, blowing it to scrap. Where it had once been, one of the Covenant's strange dropships touched down and a large Elite dropped out. It was armor that was not common to the Elite ranks. Suddenly, the Elite disappeared and moments later, Ventress appeared in the doorway. The Elite appeared and drove her back into the citadel. The probe followed and watched as Ventress nearly escaped until she was shot by the elite with a plasma weapon. Suddenly, the feed cut out. Tyranus stroked his neatly trimmed beard and said, "Have those evacuations prepped. If we get attacked, we will need the time to escape."

Suddenly, a series of explosions rocked the fortress. Tyranus used the force to switch the screen to show a feed that faced into orbit. Three of the Covenant's corvettes were blasting the fortress with plasma, causing great damage. Dropships were coming from them as well. The Sith Lord said, "Get everything and everyone out of here. We cannot win this fight. Go!"

As hesitant as Vizsla was to flee, he knew that Tyranus was right. With a hurried bow, Vizsla ran to the comms array while Tyranus ran

to another large room in the ruined fortress. Inside were three holocrans which he swooped up as well as several large and very old tomes. Placing them carefully into a case, Tyranus left the room and made his way towards the hanger where there were several squadrons of Mandalorian star fighters and transport ships as well as a star sailor waiting for him. As he made his way through the corridors of the fortress, he began to hear weapons fire coming from several different places. Then suddenly, a dozen Deathwatch warriors run up to him. The leader saluted and said, "Mandalore Vizsla told us to escort you to your ship, my Lord."

"Very well." replied the Sith Lord and they fell in around him. After several meters, they turned a corner and came face to face with a squad of the squat little grunts and wiry jackals. Immediately, Tyranus let out a barrage of force lightning that killed a couple of them and the guards around him opened fire. So fierce and unexpected was the assault that the grunts turned and fled while the jackals covered the retreat with their shields. As the Mandalorians pressed forward a hulking, ape-like brute came round the corner followed by another and another until six of the massive creatures were barring their way. The brutes armor was thick enough to handle the blasts Tyranus' guards. Soon, the Brutes were firing strange projectile weapons. Before Tyranus could raise a force shield around them, three of the Deathwatch with him were felled by red hot metal spikes piercing the weak points in their beskar armor. With a powerful telekinetic push, Tyranus pushed many of the spikes as well as a few grenades that the brutes had thrown and even the corpses of the grunts back at them. The grenades stuck to the brutes and many of the spikes speared them. Suddenly, a blue explosion killed the brutes as their grenades finally exploded. All six lay in crumpled heaps on the ground. As Tyranus and his remaining guards ran, they could here all sounds of battle getting closer. As another door opened and they entered a corridor, they found themselves on the sidelines of a firefight between a large group of DeathWatch and more Brutes and grunts. Pulling grenades off their belts, four of Tyranus guards primed and threw them, causing the creatures to try and dive out of the way. Another explosion filled the air and the DeathWatch surged forward, shooting any Covenant that so much as twitched.

Tyranus allowed himself a short feeling of smugness at being able to escape until he saw that his star sailor was destroyed. The DeathWatch ran by him, jumping into the fighters and transports. Before the last one got into his fighter, Tyranus gripped him with the force, choking him and saying, "I will not be left here by a group of rogues. Vizsla will pay for his treachery."

Just before he could extinguish the life from the warrior, a violent explosion rocked the fortress, knocking both Tyranus and the DeathWatch warrior of their feet. Into the hanger flew four of the Covenant dropships. Out jumped the big, hairy brutes. Among them were captains wielding shoulder mounted projectile weapons, plasma cannons and massive hammers. Just as they leapt out and opened fire, the Deathwatch fighters took off, shooting down any in their path and streaking into the blue. Almost half didn't make it as they were blasted by Covenant fighters. Tyranus ran with force augmented speed to the last fighter but it just before he reached it, a massive brute in full armor and armed with a gravity hammer struck the fighter so hard that it flipped onto its side, its fuselage completely smashed. The Sith Lord's heart sank to the pit of his stomach. He was alone now with dozens of enemies. Anger began to well up in him - at being

left behind by his supporters, at being surrounded by such barbaric enemies and at the knowledge that he would not make it out in time. That anger turned into a black rage. Turning, he drew his red bladed lightsaber and leapt into the midst of his surrounding enemies. With his lightsaber he deflected the enemy blasts while he sent out streams of force lightning with his other hand. His anger made him stronger than he had ever been before and his force lightning blasted aside the brutes armor and shut down the three chieftains' energy shields. Suddenly, his lightsaber shorted out. He looked at it and hooked it to his belt, unleashing the lightning with both hands. A grenade landed at his feet and he attempted to leap out of the way. The explosion sent him sailing into one of the great stone columns. He slid to the ground, several of his ribs broken. Looking up, he saw his enemies coming toward him. Summoning the dark side, he blasted his enemies away. He stood up and continued to do so until they all stayed back. Another drop ship came in. This one carried only two individuals - a strange creature in a hovering chair garbed in rich robes and a strange pink, floating creature with tentacles, a bulbous spiky body and a long neck. Its serpentine head swiveled back and forth. Suddenly, the Covenant began to move in again and strange force fields appeared around them. Tryanus blasted at them with force lightning but it was noticeably weaker. The strange floating creature not only provided force fields to the nearby aliens but also seemed to diminish the effect of the force. Several of their shields fell and they were consumed by it but the others opened fire, forcing him to use the force to shield himself. A loud roar came from the back of the ranks. The aliens ceased fire and began to part ranks from the rear. The massive brute that had smashed the last Deathwatch fighter made his way forward. In a very deep and gravelly voice, he addressed the Sith Lord, saying "Try to repair your weapon, human. I will face you alone now. The Prophet of Regret commands it to be so."

Tyranus unclipped his weapon and quickly took it apart. The crystal had shattered inside of it. Using the force, he gathered the pieces together and used an ancient force technique to put it back together. Red energy flowed into it, fusing it back together. He reassembled it and ignited the crimson blade. With a flourish, the Sith Lord saluted and adopted a classic lightsaber form two combat stance. The brute said, "I am the chieftain of the Jiralhanae. The Brutes of the Covenant and I will devour you."

With a roar, the creature charged, swinging his massive hammer. Tyranus leapt out of the way just before being crushed but was still sent flying. With a neat flip, he managed to land on his feet. The hammer was more than just that. It had a strange kinetic pulse that emanated from the head. The Sith Lord took note of this and leapt toward his opponent. The brute swung at his incoming opponent. Tyranus leapt high out of the way and landed on the creature's shoulders, attempting to drive his lightsaber through its head. His lightsaber skidded off as it came into contact with the energy shield that guarded the brute. Suddenly a massive hand smashed against him, sending him sprawling. Leaping up, Tyranus went at his enemy again. This time, when the brute swung, Tyranus used the force to redirect it as best as he could, but the force suppression from the strange floating alien only allowed him partial success. The hammer skidded off a pillar fragment, causing the generator to short. Using the force caused by Tyranus' power, the brute spun around, roaring and used the butt of the hammer to strike the human in the chest. Tyranus brought his lightsaber down on the hammer, attempting to slice it in half, but to his surprise, it only knocked it aside. The head of the

hammer came next as the brute attempted to crush him. The Sith Lord attempted too leap, narrowly being missed by the brute. The hammer's head struck the case of holocrons and tomes, crushing them and causing a massive blast of dark side energy, sending him and Tyranus and all nearby Covenant flying. Tyranus smashed through another pillar, his bones breaking as he went. By the time he landed, his spine had been shattered. The brute was lying on his back, his left shoulder dislocated and his chest bleeding where several shards of metal from nearby containers and starship wreckage had burst through his energy field and armor. Though they looked severe, the wounds didn't stop the massive ape creature. He stood and grabbing his left wrist with his right, popped his arm back into place without even a groan of discomfort. He walked over to the Sith Lord, who lay prostrate on the ground, bleeding from his mouth and nose. Disappointed that he had won by luck, the brute reached down and crushed his enemies throat. When it was clear that the human was dead he straightened and turned away. This was another victory for the Covenant. As the dropships took off, the three corvettes fired their plasma projectors, melting all the ice off the fortress and turning it into dust and then glass.

### 3. Chapter 3: The Fall of Mygeeto

General Greivous sat in his lair and pondered the past several months. Out of know where an alien fleet that called itself the Covenant. It had attacked his fleet with weapons and technology that he had never seen or even heard of. Thinking fast, he ordered a retreat to hidden coordinates but was severally injured before the jump was made. He had woken up in a new suite of armor and a strange feeling in his head. Since then, Dooku had tried over and over to contact him, but the General refused to answer. Finally and recently, the attempts to contact him had stopped. Greivous knew that Dooku would never be able to fall into favor or power again. Not after the Separatists decided to rejoin the Republic and fight together against the Covenant. Greivous had escaped capture from both the Covenant and the Republic forces with a larger droid fleet and army. As much as he hated the Jedi and loathed the Republic, Greivous knew that he would need to cooperate with them for the time being if he was to survive. The question was would they let him back. He had slaughtered over a dozen Jedi. But then again so had the Separatist leadership through their droid armies. It was war and war had casualties. Somehow the General knew that the Jedi may not see it that way, which was fine with him. He didn't plan on working closely with them anyways. He stood up and went to the room where his guard droids were charging and activated them. In a deep, mechanical voice the General said, "Come. We will rendezvous with the fleet so that I may take full command of it,"

It was a rare occasion for the fleets lead by the Sangheli Elites and the Jiralhanae Brutes to be in such close proximity to one another. However, on such rare occasions when the prophets wished to meet with the Arbiter and the Brute Chieftain. Now they sat aboard a massive Super Carrier, the Legacy of Suffering in a throne room where the three prophets, Regret, Truth and Mercy sat on three thrones while seven Brute Chieftains and eight Elite field and fleet Marshals as well as the Arbiter and the Chieftain of the Brutes knelt in their presence. The Prophet of Regret spoke to the Arbiter, saying "You did well to discover the secrets that the fortresses of that strange planet held. Unfortunately they are not Forrunner secrets and

therefore, we cannot seem to decipher them. The Engineers have been working on them for some time and seem to be getting nowhere in translating them from there strange language."

He then turned to the Brute chieftain and said, "You, Decimous did well in defeating that very powerful warrior. I am very pleased with what transpired on the cold world. I am certain that one of the human's mightiest must have fell that day. Now listen to me both of you." and he paused for effect. "The information we did glean were that four planets are most important to the human Republic's survival. The first is called Mygeeto where they harvest much ore with which to make their machines and vessels and weapons. The second is called Kamino, a very watery world where they breed clone soldiers. The third is called Geonosis where many of the war machines and robots are created and deployed from. The final and most important is their capital of Corescant. That planet must be attacked by the Brute and Elite combined forces for the human Republic guards it jealously. This is the will of the Prophets and the Forerunners. Arbiter, you will take your armada and attack the world of Mygeeto. Decimous you will go and attack the world of Geonosis. Contact me when you have completed your missions. Now go."

Grevious and his escort arrived aboard his personal flagship the Invisible Hand. Immediately on arrival, a communication technician marched up and said, "General, we just received word that another world has been decimated. I'm afraid it was your homeworld, Kaleesh."

The cyborg general froze for a moment and then let out a long roar of rage. He grabbed the technician and lifted it off the ground by its throat. "Where is the fleet that destroyed my home?" grated the general. Wheezing, the tech barely managed to reply, "Intelligence says that it is heading to the world of Mygeeto to destroy the durasteel foundries. That is the direction they went in, General."

Grevious released the tech and began giving orders as he headed towards the bridge. "Tell the fleet to set course for Mygeeto. We will engage and destroy that fleet or I will die trying." His gray cloak billowed out behind him and his heavy clawed feet clanged hard on the deck, leaving shallow dents. The fleet leapt into hyperspace. Less than ten hours later, they dropped out of hyperspace to find waiting for them a massive fleet of the strange purple ships of the Covenant. Hundreds of smaller corvettes, four carrier ships and a massive super carrier almost a hundred times larger than any ship they had ever heard of or seen before. Grevious gazed at the scene. A former confederate fleet engaged the Covenant, but they were vastly outnumbered and seemingly outgunned. Taking it all in, he began to give orders. "Commander, have our Subjugators attack that massive ship. Make sure they have frigates and cruisers to escort them. The rest of the ships with engage the rest of the fleet."

Two dozen ships, including four massive Subjugator-class Cruisers, with massive ion cannons to port and starboard, moved around the rear of the Covenant fleet towards the gigantic super carrier. The rest of Grevious fleet, made up of nearly five hundred ships, moved in on the enemies. Silence seemed to permeate the air as the fleet closed ground on the Covenant ships. Even thrumming of the ships turbine seemed to decrease in volume. The intercom chimed every few minutes, saying "Sixty seconds from turbo laser rangeâ€¦forty seconds from



turbo laser range" thirty seconds"

As they got closer, Greivous heart began to beat harder inside his metal shell as his rage grew. As soon as the voice said, "We are now in turbo laser range." Greivous yelled, "Fire everything. Launch fighters and engage their drop ships. Send our boarding craft. I want those ships boarded."

The Comm technician called over in a hoarse voice, "General, we are being haled by the other droid fleet." The general stalked over and the voice said, "This is Jedi Knight Kaston Paratis. Who is the commander of this unknown fleet?"

Greivous replied, "This is General Greivous, former commander of the Separatist forces. I am here to offer assistance, Jedi." There was a brief pause and then the voice said, "I never in my wildest dreams thought I would be glad to hear that you arrived on the battle field, General. We welcome any assistance you offer. Paratis out."

The Arbiter looked out of the view port of the Super Carrier at the new arrivals. Though the unexpected reinforcements would make things more difficult, he had no doubt that the planet and it's facilities would fall. Turning to his communications officer, he said, "Tell the ground assault forces to begin dissention to the planet service. I want those planetary defenses offline. This operation should not take long."

From off to his left, another Elite called out, "Arbiter, it appears that a number of ships are circling around behind us." This did not alarm the Arbiter. He simply turned to his comms officer and said, "Send a compliment of ships to cut them off."

The tactical droid and neomoidian in charge of the ships attacking the super carrier noticed the breaking off of the enemy ships. Nearly thirty of the corvettes and heavy cruisers and one of the assault carriers were swinging around to intercept them. The tactical droid said, "Those ships have advanced defenses for EMP attacks. However, I give a 52.5% chance that firing all three at that super carrier, it will cause its counter measures to drop. Any ships caught up in the three EMP rings will probably dead in space too."

The alien smiled and said, "Make sure that the targeting is perfect. I want that ship, and as many who can be caught in the rings, to be drifting targets for our guns."

The twenty-four ships, consisting of a number of different heavily armed ships, continued to close the distance. Two Lucrehulks, one a battleship and one a control ship, ten Munificent class frigates, four Subjugators, five Recusant light destroyers and three Providence class battle cruisers were in battle positions with Vulture droids, Tri fighters, Hyena Bombers and Gunships ready to launch. The droid control ship had landing craft ready to board and tens of thousands of battle droids ready to take and destroy the ships from the inside. The three Subjugators turned broadside to the enemy ship, already taking heavy fire from the massive super carrier. The countermeasures held but were weakening quickly. From aboard the flagship, the neomoidian wrung his hands nervously and tried to be patient. He monitored the systems as the massive super weapons charged. As soon as they were ready, he screamed in near panic, "Fire, Fire, FIRE!"

Three massive disruptive rings shot across the void, catching enemy ships in it, leaving them drifting in there places. The super carrier was completely broadside to the three Subjugators, leaving it wide open to the Ion blasts. It looked as though the three disrupters were about to hit but just before they did and completely disabled the carrier, a beam of brilliant blue energy cut across space, striking the center ship. It hit the fuel tanks, blasting the ship in two. The two halves slammed into the other two ships with enough moment to severely damage them. When the first ship's halves exploded, they took the other two with them.

General Greivous saw this and growled in rage. Turning he said to his lead captain, "Make sure the rest of those ships destroy that carrier and the ships guarding it. I am joining this battle myself."

The general and six of his IG-100 MagnaGuards went to the hangers and mounted into there modified star fighters and took to space. Their weapons cut through the smaller enemy fighters with ease and even were able to knock out some of the larger fighter and drop ships. Chatter of binary communication beeped over the systems. Before long, Greivous heard that the attack group sent after the super carrier were in dire straights, though they had destroyed many of the smaller ships. Rage continued to grow. With a roar, he turned towards his formation towards the super carrier, fully intending to lend them. Every enemy fighter and transport that got in there path was blasted to pieces. Starfighters joined in, often using themselves as suicide bombers to make sure that the general's formation made it. They landed in what seemed to be a docking bay, which it was. Greivous and his guards leapt out and began attacking all enemies near him with all four of his arms and lightsabers. Grunts, Jackals and Elites fell before them. The magnaguards worked in pairs, attacking each opponent two at a time. Elites wielding energy swords, who were not quite as dangerous as the average Jedi knight, fell before both the general and his guards.

The Arbiter watched as the space battle continued to go his way. The three EMP blasts had nearly proved disastrous. Fortunately, the Engineers and buggers had gotten everything back into shape within less than a quarter hour though most of the carrier's rear guard was gone. From behind, a Grunt leader squeaked out, "Arbiter, there are seven - things in the main hanger. Six are one hundred percent machine but one is cybernetic with mostly metal parts but internal organs and a brain."

Striding over, the Arbiter looked onto the screen and saw. Lightsabers and electrostaffs blasted through all comers. As he watched, one by one, the guards with the electrostaffs were cut to pieces. The Arbiter put his hands on his energy swords and said, "Tell two zealots to meet me in the hanger. This thing is mine."

General Greivous stood alone surrounded by elites, most with energy swords and some with blades in their gauntlets. The general had numerous cuts and gouges in his armor from the weapons but he was not truly injured. Just before another charge was about to begin, a voice called in a strange language. The elites stopped and backed off. A path opened and three elites, two in golden red armor and one in intricate and silver armor. All three ignited energy swords while the silver elite ignited two. They circled as the silver armored elite

pointed and said, "I am the Arbiter of the Covenant. Tell me your name so that I may add it to the list of warriors I have slain."

Grievous drew himself to his full height and said, "I am General Grievous. You destroyed my home world you sum. Now prepare to pay."

The energy weapons clashed hard together, causing sparks to fly. The three Elites were far more skilled than the others who had attacked him before. One got through the General's guard and cut deep into his side, narrowly missing his organ sack, though it managed to sever one of his lightsaber handles. With a mighty kick, Grievous sent the Elite several meters across the floor and managed to break through its power shield. Moving fast, he leapt over and ran it through the abdomen. It gasped like a fish as life ebbed from its body. Turning quickly, Grievous caught the other Red-gold elite's sword just in time. At the same time, he lunged at the Arbiter in an attempt to impale him through the chest. It nearly worked. The Arbiter stepped aside as the lightsaber grated off his power shield and he used the space between his blades to catch the saber blade. With a neat turn of his wrist, he attempted to lock the blade in but what happened caused the both surprise. The blade shorted out as the pressure caused the crystal inside to shatter. The end of the lightsaber blew out. Dropping the useless handle, Grievous momentarily rejoined his arms to make two full arms. He quickly broke through the other Elite's guard while holding the Arbiter at bay and slew it neatly. Finally, he and the Arbiter stood one on one. With his clawed foot, Grievous kicked up an electro staff and used his two lower arms to wield it. With a roar of rage, Grievous attacked the Arbiter, battering away at his defenses in an attempt to break through his defenses, but the Elite commander held on, managing to deflect or avoid every blow. With his own power legs, the Arbiter kicked Grievous. Though it did not knock him over, the kick did put a sizeable dent in his armor and cause him to lose his balance. Taking advantage of this, the Arbiter swept his legs before he could anchor them and stabbed down hard. The first energy sword went straight through the armor and into the cyborg's organ sack. Grievous lay there, shocked at the pain he was not used to feeling. Suddenly, his internal com went off. "General Grievous, this is Jedi Kazdan Paratus. We have to retreat. The planet is lost. Thank you for your assistance. Paratus out."

The Arbiter smiled with his four mandibles and said, "You were a very worthy opponent, General. Allow me to end your life honorably."

With that, he swept the general's head from his shoulders. With that, he pulled his second blade out of the corpse and returned to the bridge. From the viewport, he watched as the planet of Mygeeto was blasted into oblivion by his armada. Even from out of orbit, he watched as the massive deposits of raw ore flowed into massive molten lakes and rivers. Turning to the comms officer, he said, "Contact the Hierarchs. I have good news to deliver."

#### 4. Chapter 4: Resistance of Kamino

Eeth Koth stood on the bridge of his Star Destroyer, his eyes closed in deep thought. Behind him stood Jedi Master Ausar Auset and Jedi Master Stass Allie who meditated with equal depth. All was quiet and the clones and non-clones behind them did their work without speaking

unless absolutely necessary which they did in low murmurs. Suddenly, Koth's eyes snapped open and he spoke, breaking the silence. "Prepare for battle. A Covenant fleet will arrive any moment. I can feel it's approach."

The entire fleet was now buzzing. Pilots ran to their ships, technicians went to and fro doing last minute checks on everything, gunners prepped the turbo laser batteries and the Jedi braced themselves. "Contact Master Ti and Master Monn and tell them to prepare the planetary armaments for assault. I hope those Hyper-velocity weapons are ready to go. We will need them online as soon as can be." Just as he finished speaking a massive fleet dropped out of hyperspace. It was at least twice the size of their own and the massive Super Carrier left Master Koth speechless momentarily. But swiftly he regained himself and began issuing orders. "I want all squadrons launched. Keep the V-Wing and V-19's in reserve to intercept any attacking fighter and gunships. I want the ARC-170's and Y-Wings assaulting the enemy capital ships with the new Z-95 Headhunters flying escort. Master Gallia, Master Auset and Master Kolar, man your fighters. Master Allie, Master Di and Master Ma'kis'shaalas, I want boarding teams on that monster cruiser as soon as may be." As soon as the enemy ships were in range, every gun in the Republic Fleet fired. Energy and warheads flashed forth and were returned with plasma torpedoes that ravaged the shields when they were missed by the point defense weapons. Starfighters, dropships and gunships flew to and fro, blasting each other to oblivion. One of Koth's gauntlets had an uplink to the comms and he listened to the chatter of the pilots and boarding teams. Suddenly, laser and ion energy flashed through the gaps in the Republic ships with immaculate precision, reeking havoc within the front most corvettes and carriers of the Covenant fleet. As he watched three of the corvettes and one of the assault carriers go up in flames, Master Koth allowed himself a small smile. This battle was not going badly so far.

Decimus, Chieftain of the Jiralhanae brutes watched as part of his front line was decimated. "It seems they are well defended. Time to put fear into their hearts the like of which they will not recover from for the remainder of their pitiful existence. Fire up the energy projector and blast their forward ships into nothing." As another few Covenant ships went up in flames, the Super Carrier fired its energy projector, cutting through four Republic Venator-class Star Destroyers.

Master Koth gritted his teeth. Over the comms came Master Gallia, "Pursuer this is Blue Leader. What was that?" Master Koth shook his head, "I don't know, Adi. Whatever it is, we are outmatched by it." He was about to tell all ships to spread wider in order to avoid any more such blasts when his comlink chirped and Master Allie came through, "We have boarded the flagship but this thing is massive. Where should we go first." Thinking fast, Master Koth said, "Stand by on that, Stass. R4-56..." he said to an astro droid near the sensor station, "Analyze that ship and cross-reference it with every other ship the Republic has come across. Make it quick, R4-56." Within moments, the droids holoprojector showed the massive ship and pointed out where its critical systems were and also showed that it had seven such energy projectors. "Master Alli, my Astrodroid is sending you a holo image of the ship's schematics. Your first target will be the energy projectors starting from the front and going to the back. I want that ship impotent as soon as may be." As he terminated the transmission, an alarm began to buzz. "Sir, a boarding

party has just landed and it trying to reach our critical systems." Master Koth spun round and ran towards the bridge doors saying, "Commander Tombs, I want a full security detail now and make sure the Muunalist 10 are with them. Meet me at the hangers." This was just getting better and better.

In Topica city, the capital city of Kamino, Master Shaak Ti and Master Voolvif Monn watched the battle view the holocam. Both looked grim as another blast from one of the carriers wiped out several more Republic ships. "We will need reinforcements as soon as they can arrive." growled Master Monn, a large canine like Shistivaanan. Master Ti, a Tagruta, nodded and said, "I will see who the closest reinforcement would be. I would like you to organize the firing of our planetary guns, Vool and to personally lead the defense when the Covenant try to land dropships." Master Monn nodded and she swept out. Turning back to the holoprojector, he contacted the planetary guns on his comlink. "Fire the Hypervelocity Guns at the nearest Assault Cruisers. They are tearing our Star Destroyers to pieces." As soon as the words left his mouth the ground shook slightly and he saw lines of ordinance firing from several guns.

Master Koth and his team were pushing back the enemy to slowly for his taste. The Covenant had landed at several points on the ship and were reeking havoc on the security forces inside. After wiping out several groups, Master Koth was searching for the final three. With him was the Clone Commander Tombs, Advanced Recon Commando 77 Captain Fordo and his ARC Troopers. The rest of the detail with him had been destroyed by the borders. "We have cleared the Engine room and hyper drive generator, Commander. We must check the main reactor and life supports next." As he finished, his gauntlet chimed. "Go, captain." "Sir, we have just eliminated another group but at heavy cost. These brutes take a lot of punishment. I'm going to gather the remnants of other teams and find the other. How goes your search, General?" said Clone Captain Ridges. Koth replied in short, "We are searching for one of the last groups and I think they are in the main reactor. Keep me informed Captain." They came to the Main Reactor chamber not long after he terminated contact and went in shooting. The ARC troopers were armed heavily with WESTER M5 Blaster Rifles, rotary cannons, quad cannons and a large assortment of other powerful weapons. The Covenant were hit hard and the grunt technician who was about to take the maintenance hoverpad out to the main reactor fell with a blaster bolt to the head while the hoverpad itself was blasted into oblivion by one of the other troopers. The brutes turned and attack angrily with their strange weapons. The spikes they fired from their weapons punctured even the Katarn Class armor of the ARC troopers, leaving several severely wounded. Koth was among the brutes in a moment, carving a path through them until they turned on him, trying to bring down this powerful warrior. Suddenly a massive brute with a gravity hammer leapt into the fray and nearly smashed Master Koth into the deck. The concussion of the hammer scattered the brutes and several clones who were to near but Koth was able to avoid it. Koth and the brute chieftain went at each other but the battle was pitifully short. As the brute raised his hammer Eeth Koth through his lightsaber and severed the head and arms of the creature, killing it before it could swing. The rest of the Covenant saboteur party tried to flea or charged in rage but were slain quickly, leaving none alive. "Well done Commander, Captain. What are the casualties, the three who took spikes are dead and two more have severe plasma wounds. The rest are mostly uninjured." "Save for yourself, Captain. Escort the injured to the medbay." said Master Koth with a slight

smile at Captain Fordo's limp and misshapen arm from how he had been slammed against the bulkhead of the ship. "Captain Ridges, report." after a moment, a voice came on the air saying, "The captain is dead sir. My name is Lieutenant Caps and we just finished off the last of them. Permission to do a full sweep of the ship, General." Master Koth liked this new soldier. "Permission granted, Lieutenant. Carry on." When he returned to the bridge Master Koth witnessed the second volley of Hypervelocity rounds slamming through and into Covenant ships. Several enemy corvettes and assault carriers went up in flames and exploded. "Even so, we need reinforcements if we are going to win this battle. Furthermore, this is a battle we cannot afford to lose."

The comlink chimed and Master Ti came on the line. "Master Koth I have some good news. Master Rahm Kota is on his way with his militia. They should be here in less than three hours. Some of the Covenant have landed and are fighting their way into the facility. We can hold them but you have to make sure no more make it through." Master Koth replied swiftly, "I'll put our best squadrons on it now, Master Ti. May the Force be with you." "And with you, Master Koth." she replied before the transmission was terminated. Koth contacted the Jedi Masters who were fighting in space, charging them with preventing anymore dropships from making it to the surface and too take the V-Wings and Headhunters with them. Just as he finished, a chime came from Master Allie.

On board the ship, Masters Stass Allie, Ima-gun Di and Ma'kis'shaalas led four separate Republic Commando Teams. Blue and White squad were with Master Allie and were headed towards the firing arrays of the energy projectors while Master Di went with Omega Squad to take out the comms station and Master Ma'kis'shaalas caused as much havoc as they could in the firing batteries. It was a desperate mission for the ship was massive and enemies were literally everywhere. Around every corner were groups of Covenant infantry that opened fire as soon as the Republic assault teams came around. Master Stass Allie and her squad came to a door and stopped. "What are we waiting for, General?" asked White Squad leader Snowface. She was silent for a moment before saying, "Unless I'm mistaking, this is the first energy projector control room and I can sense many foes waiting for us beyond these doors." The two squad leaders looked at each other and Blue squad leader Dirk said, "Alright commandos I want two door breach maneuvers ready with us and the general being the first ones in and fighting but make sure those grenades are thermal detonators. I want a pair of big bangs before we go through." Turning to Master Allie he said, "Step back, General and get ready to be impressed." She smiled slightly. Several times that day she had already been impressed. Standing back next to Dirk she waited and watched. One of Blue Squad planted a timed charge on the door and counted down. With a loud pop the door slid open and two thermal detonators flew into the large group of enemies waiting in the room beyond. With a loud blast and twin balls of fire, the enemy were thrown into disarray. Then they were in, the Commandos maneuvering with the greatest precision while Master Gallia used the force to fend off projectiles and her lightsaber to stop enemy plasma rounds she sensed would hit one of the commandos, being careful to make sure it did not overload the green crystal in her lightsaber. It took a while to clear the room of Covenant and the Republic squad knew more were on the way. When the last brute was brought down by multiple shots to the head, Master Allie looked at the control consoles and noticed that many were heavily damaged. "Commandos take out the rest of those controls

and see if there is a way to damage the weapon itself enough to render inoperable permanently." As the clones went around blasting here and setting charges there the two squad leaders talked to Master Allie. "There is no way to get to the projector itself unless we went to a maintenance level." For a moment the Jedi master thought about it. IF they just gutted the systems, the Covenant may be able to get them back online before Kota's fleet arrived. On the other hand if they went to the maintenance level of each one, they wouldn't all be down before Master Kota arrived. After several minutes of thought and the rest of the Commandos had gathered around Master Allie made her decision. Ringing up the other Jedi Masters on her comlink she told each one of them to attack both the firing array and the energy projector itself that was nearest to them. "It is imperative that they are at least damaged enough that they will not wipe out our fleet or the planet below if they break through the fleet." After the communication was terminated, they continued on their mission. They went to the maintenance level and destroyed the power generator and energy collector before continuing on towards the next one, which was a great distance away in the massive cruiser.

Down on Kamino, Master Monn lead the Jet troopers and RAIL ARC Troopers in defense of the facilities. ARC Trooper Commander Colt served next to him, wielding a WESTER-M5 Assault Blaster Rifle with devastating effect. Even so, the enemy pushed forward. They were nearly to the cloning facilities with only the two Jedi masters and a couple dozen ARC Troopers standing in their way. "Master Monn," said Master Ti, "It is time that we drove them back. They are too close and we have little to no knowledge of what is going on in the rest of the facilities." With that, driving a wave of force energy before them and deflecting both plasma and projectiles with it, they drove the enemy back. The Covenant forces, led by a large and powerful Brute War Chieftain, didn't expect it and the lesser aliens, the Grunt and Jackals, fled before the onslaught. The Brutes and two pairs of the massive loathsome Hunters recovered quickly and began to press their attack again. The Republic defenders were beginning to be pressed back again when suddenly a volley of blaster fire and even some light missiles dropped out of seemingly know where and consumed many of them. A dozen of the Mandalorians who were recruited by Jango Fett to train the clone army flew out of the upper reaches of the facility and caught the enemy by surprise, tearing them apart. Within moments, the Covenant in the area were dead. The leader of the group, Kal Skirata marched up to the Jedi and said, "My Null-ARC troopers are helping secure the cadet barracks for the younger clones. It won't be long before these enemies are driven off our home planet." Master Ti bowed to him saying, "Thank you, Master Chief Skirata." One of the Mandalorians strode up and said, "Rahm Kota's fleet has arrived ahead of schedule, General." They all looked heavenward to see a small yet aggressive fleet engage the rear of the enemy fleet. Flying among the ships, it blasted all that stood in its way. A cheer went up from all over the facility.

With a roar of rage, Decimous swung his mighty arms and slew a nearby Grunt. "Get the fleet out of this pincer and back into position, NOW." One of his crew called back, "But my lord this ship alone has lost three of its energy projector and we are down to seventy five percent of our original assault fleet." Slumping into his throne yet still as tense as a rock, Decimous thought for a moment before finally saying, "Tell the fleet to disentangle itself and prepare for a retreat. The prophets will not be pleased."

The strike force got off the ship just before it went into hyperspace. It was a great victory but at a heavy price. A small part of the cloning facilities were heavily damaged and half the defending fleet was gone. Even so the cloning facilities were safe and therefore, the Republic still had a fighting chance to win a losing conflict.

## 5. Chapter 5: The Doom of Corescant

Master Yoda stood in the council chambers of the Jedi temple as the skyline of Corescant burned and smoked before him. The council had had visions that the great city planet would burn but whether it would fall was to be decided. Many important planets had fallen in the war with the alien alliance known as the Covenant. Mygeeto and Geonosis were completely ravaged, their entire surfaces reduced to glass, which meant that the main durasteel mine and the main battle droid factory was destroyed, leaving the Republic unsupplied and unmanned. However, these would pail in comparison if Corescant fell to the Covenant.

Suddenly the comlink chimed, interrupting master Yoda's thoughts. "Yes?" the venerable Jedi asked with a squeaking croak. "Master, the Covenant forces are mounting ground assaults on the Senate Tower and some of the Senators and the Chancellor are still inside. Most of the clones have been swept aside. It is only the Senate Guard, the Chancellor's guard and a few hundred Senate Commando's who stand between the Arbiter of the Covenant and leadership of the entire known galaxy." said Jedi Master Rahm Kota. Yoda's eyes widened though he radiated calm in his odd voice as he spoke in the commlink. "The nearest forces we must send them. Who is closest, Master Kota?" The comlink was silent for a short time. Finally Kota said, "Muunalist Ten and Torrent Company of the 501st - only about five hundred clones all told. They won't stand a chance, Master." Though the situation was rather serious, Yoda chuckled. "Know of your mistrust of clones I do, Rahm. Even if as weak as you think they are, the only defense we have to give are they. The Jedi knight in charge, I will contact. Who is he, Master Kota?" A horse snicker came from the other side-

Senator Bail Organa and Senator Padme Amidala stood before the chancellor with the rest of his strongest supporters, a group of close to twenty senators and their personal guards. Blaster fire rang throughout the Senate Tower. Senator Amidala pleaded with the Chancellor, "Please sir, you must leave while we can cover your retreat. There is only enough time for you and a few more to leave before they get here." But Palpatine only shook his head with a sad smile. "No, my lady. I cannot abandon all of you with a clear conscience. Besides, if only I remain then the Republic will still be destroyed. Saving my life will not change that. If you are to die, then we are all to die. Besides, you speak as though we are already dead. We still have some time and help could still come." Senator Amidala looked imploringly at Senator Organa. The man shrugged in resignation. "We will defend you to the last, Chancellor. If we must die, then you will certainly be the last." A murmur of agreement went through the gathered senators and their guards and blasters were drawn. The chancellor was silent, appearing moved by the words. Finally he said, "Let us make our defenses then, my friends."

The Arbiter slashed apart another clone trooper with his energy sword



and shot one bearing down on him with his plasma rifle. These weak, fake humans were pitiful in comparison with the might of his army. They had just made it up the stairs and entered the tower when a fresh salvo of energy blasts from the catwalks above cut down many of the soldiers around him and great explosions rocked the entire building. "I need a report. What was that explosion?" He called angrily into his helmet comlink. While he waited, he snatched up a Needler Rifle and began to return fire from the cover of a chunk of broken duracrete. He killed one after the other of the resisting humans with single shots until they stayed under cover, popping up to shoot one or two at a time and they ducked down just as quickly. Finally, an elite reported, "They blew the lifts and stair wells. The only way up is to climb through the great senate chamber. But that would be a death trap, Arbiter." The Arbiter threw down the empty weapon and called back angrily, "Gather in the chamber and throw up something for cover. I will be there shortly to personally lead the final assault." When the Arbiter reached the massive senate chamber, he found a great number of his best soldiers waiting under the cover of rubble and broken repulser stands. Ultra Grunts, Skirmisher Jackals, Ultra and Zealot Elites and even a quartet of Hunters were there waiting for his orders. Drawing a plasma rifle, he growled out, "Cover the Elites and Skirmishers as we leap to the top. The drones will be here soon as well. When they do arrive, the rest of you start climbing as well."

With that, he broke cover and leapt up to a higher repulser stand, firing as he did at a group of human guards. Most of the blasts he avoided and the few he didn't deflect off his personal energy shield. The elites followed, firing plasma rifles, needler rifles, needler pistols and rocket launchers. The skirmishers fired their plasma pistols and needler pistols as well. A few were armed with needler rifles and plasma sniper rifles which they used to great effect.

Senators Amidala and Organa lead the main defense in the great Senate Chamber with their two captains, Typho of Naboo and Antilles of Alderaan. The enemy was half way up but had suffered few casualties while the small group under their command was reduced to nearly half. Amidala aimed down and fired, putting a blast between the eyes of one of the Jackal Skirmishers. "We can hold till they reach the top, Bail. After that, we will need to fall back to the next position." The tall, dark haired man nodded as he fired several blasts at an elite. The blasts deflect off the great creature's energy shield though it did manage to overload it just in time for his Captain Antilles to put three shots into the creature's chest. Suddenly the sound of many chatters and squeaks came from the bottom of the shaft and with them came dozens of nasty, winged insectoid creatures. They flew above them and opened fire, killing several of the men before they could fire back. The creatures were fast and it took skill to shoot them from the air. After the defending group was reduced to little more than a dozen, Senator Organa yelled, "Fall back to the second defenses. Fall back!"

They turned and ran, firing behind them blindly to try and cover their retreat. They were in the halls that surrounded the chamber until they finally came to a smaller hall that lead to the main offices. There, many pieces of furniture and statues had been piled up as a barricade and crouched behind it were the Senate Commandos. As the last of the retreating defenders leapt behind the low part of a barricade, another large statue of a famous Gran was placed where

they had just entered. The buggers that followed were cut down, hampered by the lack of maneuvering room until they themselves found cover and fired back. The defenders fired gamely on, encouraged by the fact that they forced the attackers to take cover.

Throughout the senate tower, the defenders held the smallest chokepoints they could find with make shift barriers. The Arbiter finally reached the top. He turned and looked down, seeing that many more of his soldiers had gathered in the great chamber and started climbing. Grinning with his hideous two mandibles, he roared to those below him, "Forward! Forward for the Covenant!" The cry was taken up by every alien that could speak from the lowest and most timid grunt to the most skilled elite field marshal. They swarmed up the walls, assisting one another as the need arose - all lusting for the blood of humans and humanoids. The Arbiter waited for a goodly number of his followers before running to the door that lead to the hall the went around the great Senate Chamber. As soon as his group came in sight of the defenders' barricades, they were met by a hail of blaster fire. Many fell before any got shots off. The Elites stood in a line, allowing their personal shields to take much of the blasts as they returned fire with their weapons. One loaded a fuel rod gun and fired a shot from it. The yellow blast blew the barricade to splinters, making a great gap. In it and killing several of the Senate Commandos.

Bail Organa shook his head, trying to rid it of the ringing in his ears. Lying unconscious next to him was Senator Amidala. After snapping out of his daze, Organa lifted her up and yelled, "Retreat! Retreat to the third fighting position!" His voice sounded as though it was coming from under water and he staggered, still slightly dazed. The remaining defenders covered his retreat. Captain Antilles listened to the comblink. All the defenders were on full retreat, falling back to the final fighting positions set up between the Covenant and the Chancellor. No evacuation ships had arrived. The guards and soldiers around him began to look about wildly for a place of escape. Despair set in.

The Arbiter listened to the sound of battle with grim satisfaction. A number of Elites were trying to break into the Chancellors office. The resistance was still stiff there, being made up of red guards and senate commandos. But they could not last long. His host was infinite, made up of entire civilizations that spanned galaxies and eons. His communication device chimed and an elite field marshal reported, "Arbiter, the last few defenders of the human leaders' have been killed outside the highest office building. We are breaching the final blast door nowâ€|" the channel stayed open as the sound of an explosion was heard both over the communication device and throughout the senate tower. Suddenly, static crackled massively across the line and the Arbiter heard elites roaring and yelling in pain, shock and rage. The field marshal at the other end spoke in panicked words that were interrupted by crackles, "Arbiter... Jedi powerfulâ€| more powerful thanâ€| beforeâ€| ahhhhhhâ€|" and the communication line snapped off. Snarling in frustration, the Arbiter pulled the hilt of his energy sword from his belt and the plasma rifle from his back and began heading towards the office. Dark thoughts of killing the human leader in front of the dying population of the burning planet filled his mind when the sound of a great deal of blaster fire and plasma fire was heard again. The Arbiter froze and listened, his heart beginning to beat hard and fast and his anger beginning to temper so that his thoughts again became clear. The sounds of blaster fire were

more synchronized and the weapons were more powerful ones. It was more of the fake human soldiers but far better armed and prepared. Among the noises in the great senate audience chamber, the Arbiter heard the snap hiss and the sizzling hum, swish and crack of a Jedi lightsaber. With a grim smile, the great elite turned and went back the way he came, forgetting the slaughter of his soldiers in the chambers of the Supreme Chancellor. It was time to test his skill against a Jedi once again.

Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker leapt and dodged his way through a seemingly impenetrable wall of plasma and projectile fire from the thickly massed Covenant forces in the senate auditorium, deflecting as little as possible to avoid shorting out his light saber. His padawan Ahsoka Tano lead a squadron of ARC-170 Heavy Fighters in an attempt to keep as many dropships as possible away from the Senate Tower. They came down by the half dozen and were durable enough to take all but the heaviest and most concentrated laser cannon fire. Out of each flight that landed, they only ever managed to destroy two or three. Even so, this thinned the ranks that made it into the tower and Skywalker recognized that. Somewhere in the Senate Tower was the Arbiter of the Elites, one of the highest leaders in the Covenant. He was Skywalker's target. The way the Jedi knight figured, if he killed or captured such a key figure, the attack on Corescant, at least in small part, would be stopped or at least slowed down. This thought crossed his mind as he faced off another elite. It was in white and gray armor and wielded an energy sword. Skywalker grinned and fainted to the left. Out of reflexes, the elite swung to cut him off and realized, too late, the trap set for him. With a duck and a thrust, Skywalker disarmed the personal shield of the elite's armor and with a leap, summersault and slash, he beheaded it. A roar came from the top of the senate chamber. Looking up, Skywalker was sure he had found him. It was a great distance and the walkways and hover-platforms were thronged with enemies but even so the difference in bearing and look of the elite made it obvious. The armor was silver with gold filigree and looked utterly unique and he held himself tall, an unlit energy sword in his hand. The Arbiter leapt down from platform to platform at the Jedi knight began to leap up and when they met, the force of the blows caused a shock wave that knocked surrounding combatants to the ground. Skywalker was surrounded by enemies, many of which were the elites and they were armed with energy swords. "This battle is mine. Take this structure and kill the human leader. Bring me his severed head."

The Covenant surrounding them hesitantly turned away and continued to try and battle their way to the human leader while the two mighty warriors circled. Skywalker held his blade out in a Form IV ready stance while the elite before him held his blade out in front and gripped his wrist with his offhand. "It has been some time since I fought a Jedi in personal combat." said the Arbiter. "I believe the last one I fought was trapped in a body of armor and had a sack holding all of his entrails. It was over the cold world you call Mygeeto if I'm not mistaken."

Skywalker smiled with little amusement. "That was no Jedi, Arbiter. That was the former Separatist General Greivous. He was well trained in our combat but was nothing compared to a true Jedi." With that, he leapt forward and attacked methodically, testing out the Arbiter's skills with his weapon. The Arbiter did the same, testing how the young Jedi held up to the raw strength, blurring speed and undeniable skill of a master energy swordsman. After several minutes

they broke off and the Arbiter was about to speak but, before he could, Skywalker blasted him with a telekinetic wave. The Jedi expected to send him spinning over the side into the depths of the Audience Chamber below. Something seemed to take the brunt of the blast however and the Arbiter stumbled backwards and fell onto the lower hover-platforms. Quickly getting over his shock that the Force did not have the desired effect, Skywalker leapt after his enemy.

In the council chambers of the Jedi Temple, Master Yoda watched with sadness. Corescant would be lost in a matter of hours. Much of the great cityscape was already being blasted by the massive energy projectors of the Covenant Corvettes and Cruisers that had slipped past the defending fleet. Master Yoda had felt hundreds of thousands of lives end in a matter of seconds, millions in a matter of minutes. The diminutive master looked up and saw one of the great Super Carriers moving into position to fire on an area of the planet that was still being evacuated. Frowning, the Jedi Master reached out with the force. He did not just reach out to the Carrier but also to all the Jedi around him. Many were locked in combat for a legion of the Covenant were attempting to take the temple stairs but those that weren't sensed his presents and stopped whatever they were doing. One by one they linked minds in a great force meld that set their wills and powers on a single goal - to bring down the Super Carrier. At first, when less than a hundred Jedi had reached up, the Carrier didn't show a single outward sign that it had been gripped. But then the power of the Jedi in the defensive fleet who were watching from view ports and bridges joined them with their strength and the massive Covenant ship halted, suspended by the great power. Slowly, painstakingly the Jedi tried to move the ship from its position but it was too great. "As one my brothers and sisters we must act." Echoed the mind of Master Yoda in the minds of the other Jedi. Even so, they moved it slowly and without great effect. The ship's energy projectors began to power up. Still more Jedi who managed to find cover began to add their power to the great pool of force energy. The great ship sped up marginally. Still more Jedi added their power and the ship began to sink towards a section of the planet that had already been decimated by the Covenant ships. But it moved too slowly. It would destroy the buildings below it and its shields would hold it together. When all seemed lost, another being added their power. They were powerful beyond powerful and steeped deeply in the dark side. The power of the light and dark wrapped hard around the ship and as one great being tore it from the sky and slammed it into the burning rubble and glass of the ruined section of Corescant. Many began to release the power until but the dark sider amongst them tore a great chunk from the ship - and then another, and then another. After several minutes the ship burst into white and blue flame as chunk after chunk of it broke off and dropped into the depths of the ruined sectors of the city. \_

\_Both Skywalker and the Arbiter had stopped their duel and watched in all as the Covenant Super Carrier was torn from the sky and crashed into the planet. They watched as it was torn to pieces by some invisible force and burned in utter ruin. Before the duel recommenced, Skywalker murmured, "That will buy the evacuation ships a good amount of time to get any few remaining survivors off world." The Arbiter nodded, "Only for them to be destroyed on another. Let us finish this, Jedi." \_

\_They reengaged, their blades spinning and whirling so fast that if there were any to see, they would not be able to follow them save by

the blue flashes they made. Separating, the Arbiter pulled a second energy sword hilt from his belt and ignited it while Skywalker moved in after him. As the duel continued, the Jedi Knight began to give ground as the dual wielding Arbiter increased his savagery with every blow, snarling and roaring. Again, Skywalker reached out with the force with all the power he could muster and blasted the great elite. The blast that would have sent a small starship careening off course sent the Arbiter flying back through a wall and out onto a duracrete pad. Skywalker was about to leap after him when he noticed one of the enemy Corvettes moving into position over the Senate Tower. Thinking fast, he moved with all the speed he could muster, calling on the force to amplify it as he leapt out onto the pad and away from the great super structure. As he did, he called on his comlink to his faithful droid, R2-D2. "Artoo take off and meet as soon as you can. Track my comlink to find me." As he broke communication, the energy projector of the Corvette fired. With a final leap, Skywalker pushed off as hard as he could away from the ground and out into open space as the building that symbolized the power and grandeur of the Republic began to implode on itself from the punishment of the powerful plasma beam. Just as he was sure that he was going to die, his sleek blue starfighter dropped beneath him and he landed safely in the cockpit. Wordlessly he strapped in and took the controls, his mind and heart down cast. The shining jewel and capital of the Galactic Republic was gone. His emotions completely shut down as he began to ask over the comlink who else had survived.\_

\_The Arbiter stumped down the long walkway towards the bridge where the Prophet of Truth and the Chieftain of the Brutes stood observing the total destruction of the planter. He had barely been saved by a Spirit Dropship he had managed to contact and it had flown him above the firing Corvette As he strode down, he heard the snarls and growls of disgust and even hatred from the Brutes on board. Ignoring them, he stepped up and stood at the shoulder of the Prophet of Truth. "It is a glorious day, Hierarch." he said in a low voice. The Prophet nodded without looking at him and said, "It is indeed Arbiter and you have proven yourself a mighty warrior and capable leader, as have you, Decimus." he ended addressing the Brute Chieftain who was leaning on his gravity hammer. The brute's beard and armor were flecked with the blood of a hundred different species. "But most of the humans had escaped and we were unable to capture or kill the majority of the leaders or of the more powerful Jedi." The Prophet nodded again as he watched the great Jedi Temple blasted into oblivion. "They are demoralized now. This is but a taste of the impending doom that will await them and now they know it." \_

## 6. Chapter 6: The Endgame Begins

Silence filled the great auditorium on the planet of Chandrilla. All the leadership of the Galactic Republic, the former Confederacy and the Jedi order had gathered in secret to discuss and debate the loss of the capital planet of Corescant. Instead of debate and discussion, however, all that was heard was a somber silence. Finally, Supreme Chancellor Palpatine stood and cleared his throat. Every ear was lent as he said, "My friends I know that this is indeed a grave time. The loss of Corescant is more devastating than any loss we have felt in this long and terrible war or in the war that proceeded it. I myself am at a loss as to how we should answer this attack. Does anyone have an inkling or theory or even the shadow of an idea?"

More silence. With a sad sigh, Chancellor Palpatine turned to the raised box next to his own and asked, almost pleadingly, "Master Jedi, has the force given you any insight as to how to answer this travesty?" The diminutive Jedi Master Yoda shook his small head and said, "Clouded the force remains. After hours of meditation, only vague ideas or wild schemes do any of the Jedi have. So difficult it is to keep a clear head, Chancellor. Even the oldest and wisest cannot remain clear of strong emotions."

The Chancellor looked even more pleadingly at the Jedi and then around at all the boxes and seats of the great auditorium as he said, his arms spread wide to all around. "Please, my friends â€" Jedi, Senators, Governors and representatives â€" we must decide on something. I myself am so utterly at a loss." Once again, the Chancellor of the Republic was only met by silence. With a sigh of exasperation, the Chancellor was about to sit down when a young and strong voice rang out. "We must take the fight to the enemy!" All Eyes turned to the box that the Jedi council stood in. A young man with dark hair stood. His gloved hand was clenched before him as he said in a strong and resolute voice, "We must gather our forces and show the Covenant that we will not be conquered â€" that we will do whatever is necessary to defend our home systems and worlds."

The Chancellor allowed a fond but sad smile to cross his face and he said, "Young Anikan Skywalker. I applaud your courage but our forces have lost nearly a third of their strength. How can such a plan be carried out with such depleted force?" Master Mace Windu, a tall and imposing master stepped forward slightly and said, "Forgive young Skywalker, Chancellor. This is an example of the wild schemes that some among us have come up with." Skywalker glared at the Master before saying to all, "This galaxy is full of beings who are capable of standing in line with our forces. If we have depleted our clone and droid armies then we must get others. We must send forth a call to every moon and planet and asteroid with life on it, asking the people of this galaxy to arm themselves and report. We will arm every ship and being that can carry a weapon and take the fight back to the Covenant. "

Silence followed Skywalker's speech. His long-time friend and former master Obi-Wan Kenobi rubbed his small goatee and mustache before sighing in resignation. "I believe that my former padawan is correct. Masters, Senators and representatives of the Republic, we cannot rely solely on the clones or the droids anymore. In that direction lies utter and complete defeat." More silence. Suddenly, as if losing his patience, Chancellor Palpatine slammed his hand on the podium of the box before him and said, "Blast it! I understand what we have all lost but we will lose everything else if we can't come to some kind of decision. Let us put it to a vote. All in favor of Skywalker's plan, key in your vote."

The representatives of the Republic senate looked down at their platforms and voted. It took some time for all the votes to be submitted. The chancellor looked down and observed the screen. Looking up, he took a deep breath and said, "My friends, the vote to go through with Skywalker's plan has been approved. There are many details we must work out now â€" recruiting stations, training points and logistics."

As the discussions continued, Anikan clenched his fists as he wrestled to suppress his impatience. Obi-wan couldn't help but smile.

He leaned over and whispered, "What did you expect, Anikan? Did you think they we just gather blasters and go to planets, hand them out and take them to war against the Covenant right this very moment? This course of action may be the best but it will take time." Anikan knew this but even with that knowledge he could help but be impatient. The Covenant itself was making plans and the sooner they could attack the alien armada the sooner the galaxy would be free from its threat.

Little to the knowledge of either Anikan or the leadership of the Republic, the Covenant was still over the orbit of the decimated Corescant. Partly because of the sheer amount of time it had taken to destroy the planet, as covered as it was in buildings that were literally miles high, and partly because the prophets were not wholly certain how they were to proceed. While they had general ideas of where some of the worlds of the galaxy were, they had no clue where all of them were nor where the escaped ships of the Republic fleet had gone. On board one of the colossal super carriers, the prophets discussed the issues behind closed doors. Out of all the prophets, the prophets of Mercy, Regret and Truth held the most sway and therefore had the most to say. "We have sent expeditionary forces in all directions but it is not a very efficient to explore civilized space. It's hard to imagine that our engineers were unable to get anything from the wreckage of the ships?" said the Prophet of Regret. The Prophet of Truth replied, "The Republic infidels thoroughly wiped their ships' memory banks. There was nothing left to recover. I am afraid that these expeditions are the only way we will possibly find the other worlds. Our long range scanners are doing much better and we have identified a large number of worlds. I propose we send fleets to each of them and that we purify them as well." The other Prophets murmured in agreement and the Prophet of Mercy said, "Yes. If we don't continue to purify them, the infidels will rally and be able to attack us. We must hit them again and again so that they can never recover from this blow."

The months that followed were tense for both the Republic and the Covenant. After the destruction of Corescant, nearly every inhabited moon and planet in the core systems has been evacuated and fled, rallying in their ships above the planet of Chandrilla and several others. Great stations were set up to train those who volunteered and to equip them. At the same time, the Covenant devastated every planet they came across, turning every world and moon into a glass-incrusted sphere. The warriors of the alien alliance became increasingly restless. Many fights between brutes and elites broke out, resulting the deaths of many from both species. The main force of the Covenant stayed above the planet Corescant, still in the void of space when a report came in. The Republic fleet had been found and replenished. Many thousands of ships where being deployed from hidden foundries and fortresses and where attacking the exploring Covenant fleets with vengeance. Hearing this, the prohpets called back every fleet and moved in the direction of the incoming Republic fleet. The full force of the Covenant military would soon face the full force of the Republic forces.

Chancellor Palpatine stood alone in his quarters on Chandrilla and thought about the events leading up to this moment. His mind only briefly touched events like the Great Hyperspace Wars five millennia before, the Great Sith Wars and many others that followed. He dwelled long upon the second Great Sith War when Kaan and the Brotherhood of Darkness were crushed by Darth Bane, founder of the Rule of Two.

Those events were strikingly similar to those that surrounded him. Just as the Republic and Sith Empire had gathered to fight one final battle on the planet of Ruuson, so now were the gathered forces of the Republic and the Covenant. It was in that moment that Palpatine decided that he himself would go and take part in the battle and his dark side acolytes would join him. This war would end and he, the Dark Lord of the Sith would be the one to end it. With that decision, he keyed his comlink. A deep voice replied on the other end, "Yes, my Lord Sidious." "Prepare the others, Master Bulq. We are going to end this war once and for all." Said the Sith Lord as he strode from the room.

End  
file.